

# COFFEE WITH THE COUNSELOR

## OAKLAND CATHOLIC COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER

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# THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

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COMPONENTS OF AN APPLICATION ... COVID-19 CHANGES IN ADMISSIONS ...  
APPLICATION DEADLINES ... FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS ... AFTER YOU APPLY

# THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

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- There are a lot of moving pieces
- Every university/college does things differently: deadlines, policies, application type, requirements, institutional goals, etc.
- Policies can change year to year
- Your challenge (and ours as college counselors):
  - Helpful organizer
  - Calming presence
  - Enforcer

# COMPONENTS OF AN APPLICATION

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# COMPONENTS OF AN APPLICATION

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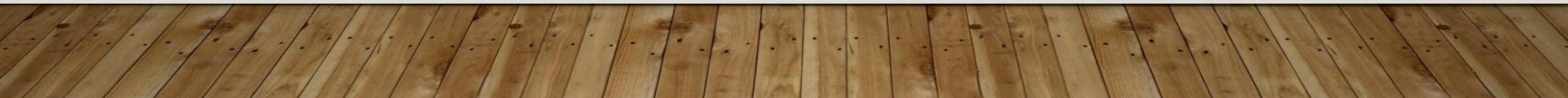
## ALWAYS

- Application Form
- High School Transcript (Official or Self-Reported)

## USUALLY

- Application Fee
- Letter(s) of Recommendation
- School Report and Profile
- Personal Statement & Supplemental Essay(s)
- ~~SAT/ACT Scores~~

## SOMETIMES

- Interview
  - Portfolio or Audition
  - Early Decision Agreement
  - SAT/ACT Scores
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# AN APPLICATION \*ALWAYS\* INCLUDES:

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- Application Form (S)
- High School Transcript
  - Self-Reported Transcript (S) or Official Transcript (C)

S: Student's responsibility

C: College Counseling Center (CCC)'s responsibility

P: Parent's responsibility

# APPLICATION FORM (S)

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- Common Application\*\*\*
- Scoir/Coalition Application
- University-Specific Application

# HS TRANSCRIPT - OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT (C)

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- Student requests that the CCC sends her official transcript to each college using our electronic Transcript Request Form (TRF)
  - One TRF per college
  - Keeping Scoir up to date is crucial and helps the process move along efficiently
- Ideally, the student submits her application to that college BEFORE submitting OC's TRF

*\*Transcripts won't be ready until after the add/drop period ends in early September*



# HS TRANSCRIPT - SELF-REPORTED TRANSCRIPT (S)

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- Often called the SRAR, SSAR, etc.
- Some colleges ask the student to report her high school courses & grades at the time of applying instead of requiring an official transcript from the CCC
  - Sometimes the SRAR is part of the application, sometimes it's a separate step after the student submits her application
- The self-reported transcript must be identical to her OC transcript – titles of courses, grade/credit reporting, etc.
  - Colleges compare information when we send her final transcript after graduation

*\*A note on Pitt and Penn State...*



# AN APPLICATION \*USUALLY\* INCLUDES:

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- Application Fee (S)
- Letter(s) of Recommendation (C)
- School Report and Profile (C)
- Personal Statement & Supplemental Essays (S)

# APPLICATION FEE (S)

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- Usually anywhere from \$30-\$100
- Colleges will waive the application fee if you demonstrate financial need
- Some colleges will also waive the application fee for students who...
  - Visit campus
  - Participate in an interview
  - Attend a college visit at OC
  - Apply early
  - Ask 😊

# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (C)

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- Most students made their teacher requests before summer
- OC recommenders send their letters to the CCC through Scoir and we send students' letters directly to their colleges
- Students are not allowed to view their letters when they apply to colleges. Before applying they are required to sign the FERPA waiver, stating that they agree not to look at their LOR
- When your daughter completes the TRF she will include which letters she wants us to send to her colleges
- Non-OC recommenders: email their letter to Mrs. Warden or Mrs. Kemmer. We will add the letter to Scoir then use the same process we use for an OC LOR.

# SCHOOL REPORT AND PROFILE (C)

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- The CCC sends these documents automatically with every transcript - your daughter doesn't need to do anything to request them
- Includes information about OC such as...
  - GPA scale and weighting
  - # of AP/honors classes offered
  - College counselor contact info
- Includes information about the student such as her GPA

# PERSONAL STATEMENT & SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS (S)

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- Personal Statement = College Essay = Common App essay
  - 650 words
- Supplemental essays are prompts that are unique to one college.
  - The number of supplements required varies by college
  - 50-650 words
- Optional is not always optional!
- Your daughter should be organized early so she knows how many essays she'll need to write, how long they need to be, if she can submit the same essay to multiple colleges, etc.

# AN APPLICATION \*SOMETIMES\* INCLUDES:

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- Interview (S)
  - Virtual or in-person (remember, optional = required)
- Portfolio or Audition (S)
  - For fine arts majors/programs
- Early Decision Agreement (S, C, P)
  - Required if your daughter is applying Early Decision (more on this later)
  - The student, a parent, and her college counselor are all required to sign this electronic agreement (a different version of the form is sent to each party)

# AN APPLICATION \*SOMETIMES\* INCLUDES:

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- SAT/ACT Scores (S)
  - Test-optional colleges
    - The student chooses if she wants to apply with her test scores
  - Test-free colleges
    - The college doesn't consider SAT/ACT scores even if the student submits them



# TEST-OPTIONAL ADMISSION

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- Currently about 75% (over 1,700) of the nation's bachelor degree granting institutions are practicing test-optional admissions for the 2023-2024 admission cycle. This means that test scores do not need to be considered as part of the application process.
- Test scores can be submitted to test-optional institutions if the scores are on par with the college admission statistics/average scores
- If deciding to apply test-optional, students should NOT send scores and should NOT self-report scores on applications

# IF YOUR DAUGHTER IS APPLYING WITH SAT/ACT SCORES

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- Students send SAT or ACT scores
  - Log-in to College Board or ACT account
  - Look for “Send My Scores”
  - There is a fee per score send
    - Some schools will accept self-reported scores
    - Some schools will accept scores from counselor (typically small, less-selective schools who know us)
- Note: Scores are not sent instantaneously
  - A deadline is a deadline is a deadline
  - November 1 strategy

# COVID-19 CHANGES IN ADMISSION

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# COVID-19 CHANGES IN ADMISSION

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- 1,700+ colleges have gone test-optional
- More holistic approach in reviewing an application
  - essays/personal statement
  - grades/rigor of courses
  - activities/extracurriculars
- COVID-19 section on the Common Application
- Virtual opportunities to connect with admissions, virtual interviews, portfolio reviews, and auditions options
- Grace - understand everyone in some way is affected by the pandemic
- Still in the business of admission!

# APPLICATION DEADLINES

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a.k.a. “Application Plans”

# DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

| Regular Decision   | Rolling Admission  | Early Action (EA)  | Early Decision (ED)   | Restrictive Early Action (REA)   |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>DEFINITION:</b></p> <p>Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.</p> | <p><b>DEFINITION:</b></p> <p>Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.</p> | <p><b>DEFINITION:</b></p> <p>Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.</p> | <p><b>DEFINITION:</b></p> <p>Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.</p> | <p><b>DEFINITION:</b></p> <p>Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.</p> |
| <p><b>COMMITMENT:</b></p> <p>NON-BINDING</p>   | <p><b>COMMITMENT:</b></p> <p>NON-BINDING</p>   | <p><b>COMMITMENT:</b></p> <p>NON-BINDING</p>   | <p><b>COMMITMENT:</b></p> <p>BINDING</p>  | <p><b>COMMITMENT:</b></p> <p>NON-BINDING</p>   |

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.

# DEADLINES - STRATEGIZING

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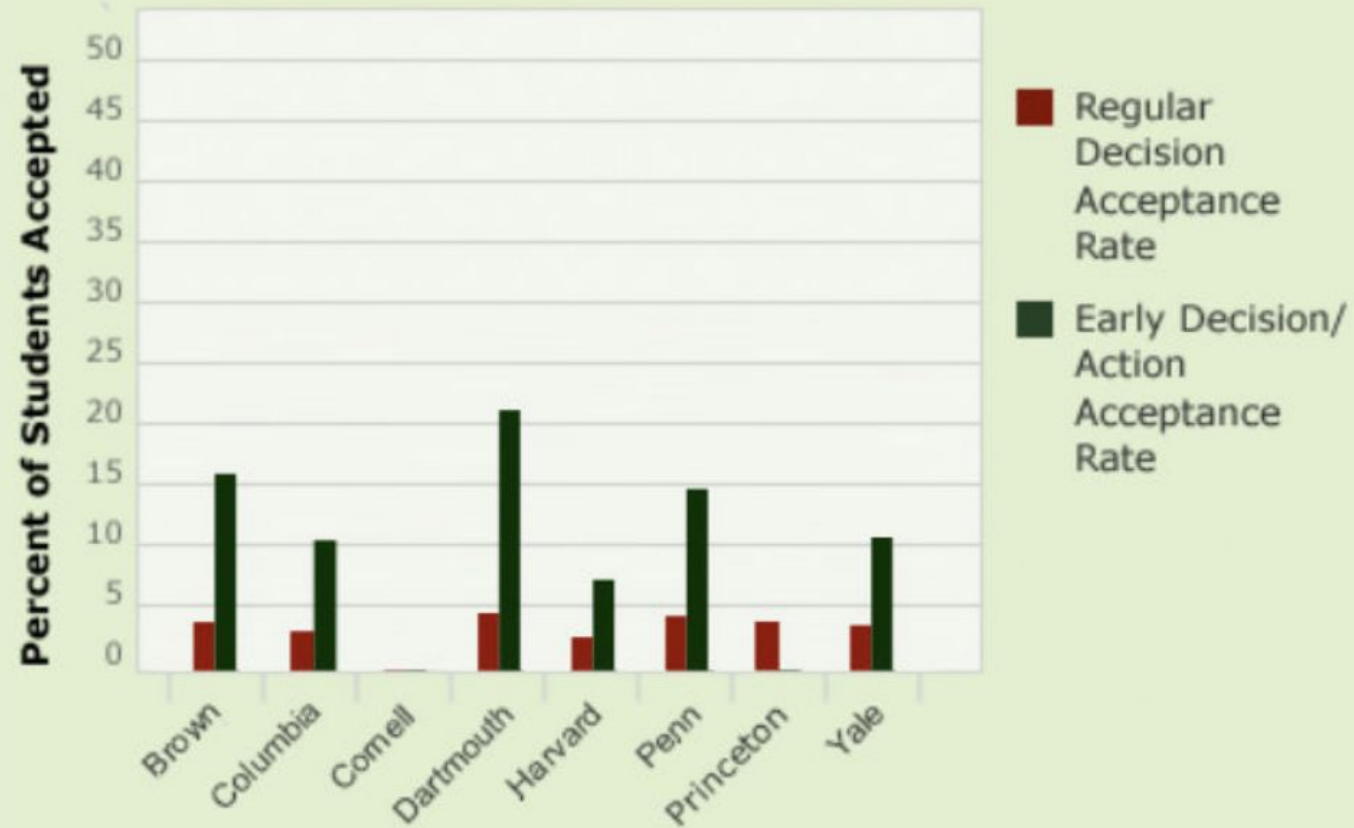
- Early Decision (ED) usually has the highest likelihood of acceptance  
BUT...
- ED is not for everyone (binding!!!)
  
- Early Action *usually* has the second highest likelihood of acceptance and is nonbinding

| Ivy League Colleges | Overall Accept. Rate | Regular Decision Accept. Rate | Regular Decision Apps Accepted | Regular Decision Apps Received | Early Decision / Action Accept. Rate | % of Class Filled by Early Apps | Early Decision / Action Apps Rcvd | Early Decision / Action Apps Accepted | Expected Number of Students to Enroll | Total Apps Received | Total Apps Accepted |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Brown               | 5.4%                 | 3.5%                          | 1,652                          | 41,028                         | 15.9%                                | 52.1%                           | 5,540                             | 885                                   | 1,700                                 | 46,568              | 2,537               |
| Columbia            | 3.7%                 | 2.9%                          | 1,568                          | 54,116                         | 10.1%                                | 43.5%                           | 6,435                             | 650                                   | 1,492                                 | 60,551              | 2,218               |
| Cornell             | 8.7%                 | NYP                           | NYP                            | NYP                            | NYP                                  | NYP                             | NYP                               | NYP                                   | 3,296                                 | NYP                 | 5,836               |
| Dartmouth           | 6.2%                 | 4.5%                          | 1,158                          | 25,693                         | 21.2%                                | 51.4%                           | 2,664                             | 591                                   | 1,150                                 | 28,357              | 1,749               |
| Harvard             | 3.4%                 | 2.6%                          | 1,223                          | 47,349                         | 7.4%                                 | n/a*                            | 10,086                            | 747                                   | 1,665                                 | 57,435              | 1,970               |
| Penn                | 5.7%                 | 4.2%                          | 2,008                          | 48,371                         | 14.9%                                | 49.8%                           | 7,962                             | 1,194                                 | 2,400                                 | 56,333              | 3,202               |
| Princeton           | 4.0%                 | 4.0%                          | 1,498                          | 37,601                         | n/a#                                 | n/a#                            | n/a#                              | n/a#                                  | 1,308                                 | 37,601              | 1,498               |
| Yale                | 4.6%                 | 3.4%                          | 1,332                          | 38,996                         | 10.5%                                | n/a#                            | 7,939                             | 837                                   | 1,554                                 | 46,935              | 2,169               |

Source: <https://www.ivycoach.com/2025-ivy-league-admissions-statistics/>



## Ivy League Colleges Acceptance Rates Class of 2025



Source: <https://www.ivycoach.com/2025-ivy-league-admissions-statistics/>

# APPLYING EARLY

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- Our goal is to have your daughter's college applications submitted by November 1 or earlier
  - Higher chance of admission
  - Sometimes application fee is waived
  - Sometimes extra scholarship considerations
- Watch out for October 15 EA/ED deadlines
  - UNC Chapel Hill, Georgia Tech and a few more
- An exception: Some of her colleges only offer ED and RD but they aren't her first choice college

# APPLYING EARLY

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- Applying Early: Rolling Admission
  - There are more spots available in the fall vs. in the spring
  - Watch out for “Priority” deadlines
  - Ideally her rolling admission applications are submitted by November 1

*\*A note on Pitt and Penn State...*

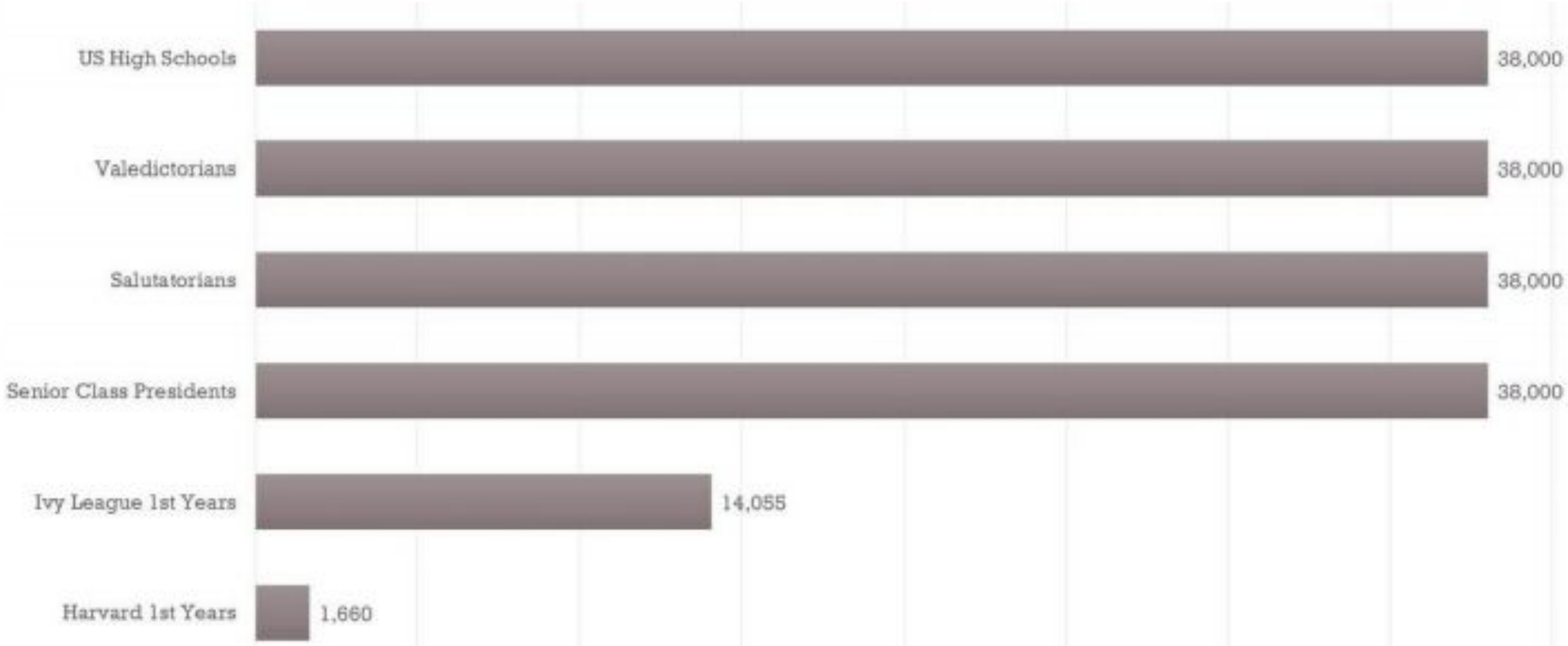
# BUILDING A BALANCED COLLEGE LIST

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- Is it a balanced list (financially, too)?
  - 2-3 Reach Colleges
  - 4-5 Target Colleges
  - 2-3 Likely Colleges
- How does she know if a college is a reach, target, likely?
  - Scoir Scattergrams
  - Scoir Admissions Data
  - College's website
    - “Admitted Student Profile” or “Freshman Class Profile”
  - NEVER trust a third-party website
- It's not too late for your daughter to add to/build her college list!

# THE REALITY OF SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS

## Reality



# FINANCIAL AID

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# FINANCIAL FIT

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- Net price calculators are on every school website
  - If asking for GPA and test scores along with finance information, they may also be trying to estimate potential scholarships
- Financial aid data on college websites
- Scoir financial aid charts
- **We strongly recommend you have an idea of the financial commitment before your daughter applies Early Decision**

# FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS

- \*\*\*\*\* Revised Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens December 2023
- CSS Profile opens October 1
  - Require the prior prior year of taxes (i.e. if you are looking to enter college in Fall of 2023, your 2021 taxes will be used to calculate eligibility)
  - CSS for Institutional Aid, not Federal Aid
- Deadlines vary – check college websites
  - General rule of thumb: consider the admission application deadline the same as your financial aid application deadline



# FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS CONT.

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- Some tips to make the financial aid application process smoother...
  - Report SSN on the college application
  - Use the Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) on the FAFSA
  - Double check ALL information before submitting (Full name, DOB, address, etc.)
  - Remember your usernames and passwords!

# AFTER YOUR DAUGHTER APPLIES

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# AFTER YOUR DAUGHTER APPLIES

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- Check Scoir to see when documents have been sent to her college(s)
- ALSO confirm with each admission office, either through a portal that college provides or by contacting them directly
- It can take several days for colleges to process documents - be patient!

# APPLICATION PORTALS

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- After your daughter submits her application to a college, most colleges will email her a username and password/pin that will give her access to an online application portal
- Please encourage your daughter to stay up to date on her email and check her portals regularly
- Colleges will communicate through these portals about...
  - Missing application and financial aid documents
  - Admission decisions
  - Financial aid awards

# WHEN THE DECISIONS START ARRIVING:

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- We ask your daughter to share with us:
  - Admission decisions (good or bad!)
  - Scholarship awards (copy/image of the award letter)

# FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM

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# HOW YOUR DAUGHTER CAN HELP HERSELF NOW

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- First step: get organized!
- Take advantage of our resources and our availability
- Start applications and finish them as completely as she can right now
- Begin writing essays
- Application completion and submission by deadline
- Attend admission events (virtual and in person – on-campus or in Pittsburgh) or visits to OC

# HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

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- Organization is key
  - Research
  - Setting work times
  - Setting “we won’t talk about college” times
- Financial aid forms & deadlines
- Challenge: it’s still her process



# HOW COLLEGE COUNSELORS CAN HELP

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- One-on-one meetings
  - Developing a balanced college list
  - Brainstorm essay topics/review drafts
  - Answer application questions
  - Strategize – application plan, test-optional, etc.
- “Insider information”
- Class meetings, host college visits, share resources
- Encourage, provide wisdom
- Advocate!

# UPCOMING COLLEGE COUNSELING EVENTS

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- College Visits – September-November during school hours
- Self-Reported Transcript Workshop - September 7 (date tentative)
- Financial Aid Night – September 14 (virtual)
- Admission outcomes – March (exact date TBD)

QUESTIONS?

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